

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

November 9, 2006

Salisbury, North Carolina

The Historic Preservation Commission for the City of Salisbury met in regular session on Thursday, November 9, 2006, in the Council Chambers at the City Hall, 217 S. Main Street.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Michael Young.

In addition to Michael Young, the following members were present: Raemi Evans, Ronald Fleming, Susan Hurt, Judy Kandl, Anne Lyles, and Wayne Whitman

Absent: Jack Errante

Michael Young welcomed all persons present and read the meeting's purpose and procedures.

Oath of Office to New Member

Judy Kandl was sworn in as a new member of the Commission by the chairman, Michael Young. She was welcomed by Commission members and seated.

Requests for Certificates of Appropriateness

Note: Wendy Spry informed the Chair that Application #H-43-06 has been moved to the December agenda.

H-42-06 618 S. Fulton St. – Daniel J. DeGraaf, owner

Request: Replace existing copper gutters and downspouts with white aluminum, same size; repaint house trim white (same as existing)

Daniel DeGraaf was sworn to give testimony for the request.

Mr. DeGraaf stated that he had new information to present in reference to his request for gutters and downspouts which was tabled at the last meeting.

The request was taken off the table by Chair.

Mr. DeGraaf informed the Commission that as was requested at the last meeting, he had gotten a 3rd quote for copper gutters and downspouts. He testified that the estimate is in the same neighborhood as the others, approximately \$11,000.

Mr. DeGraaf presented a sample of bronze colored gutters which at last month's meeting was considered to be more appropriate than the requested white. Mr. DeGraaf also presented pictures of the bronze sample taken beside the existing downspout in order to see the color variation.

Michael Young stated that he had spoken with Mitchell Wilds from the State Historic Preservation Office to get comments concerning the replacement of copper downspouts. Mr. Wilds' concerns were whether the house is contributing to the district, and if the gutters and downspouts are architectural defining elements to the building. He suggested that color, shape, texture, and installation be considered. Mr. Wilds also informed him that should the Commission decide to require copper, a lesser material could be used on the rear of the house and copper on the sides visible from the street. In addition, Mr. Wilds suggested that some type galvanized material that has been electric statically painted or baked also be considered.

Janet Gapen shared the following comments she had received from the state representatives:

- The lifespan of aluminum does not compare with that of copper causing the applicant to probably have to replace the aluminum 3 times to meet the lifespan of copper.
- On certain styles of architecture, copper gutters can be a significant feature, especially for other copper features on the house, such as dormer or bay windows.

In response to a question from Michael Young, Mr. DeGraaf testified that he had not gotten estimates for any material other than aluminum.

Judy Kandl, in a question to the Commission asked what criteria determines "cost prohibitive."

Michael Young explained that a house purchased in the historic district comes with a package of Secretary of Interior Standards that has to be met. He said, "Cost is not a consideration." As an example, he further explained that there have been cases when the Commission has had to rule on requests to replace slate roofs when the costs were astronomical, but the reason they were allowed to be replaced with another material was not because of cost but because the structure of the house was not built to support the weight of a collapsing roof.

In response to a question from Susan Hurt, Mr. DeGraaf stated that the cost for copper on just the front of the house would probably be at more than one-quarter of the entire cost.

Raemi Evans asked if there were any other copper features on the house, to which Mr. DeGraaf answered, "No."

Deliberation

Commission members agreed that copper is a character defining element of the house.

Judy Kandl stated that since details pertaining to retaining copper is specifically mentioned under roofing as well as architectural metals she thinks the best compromise would be for the front to remain copper and consider change on the back only, especially since the house is interior to the street as opposed to being on a corner.

Michael Young read the following Historic District Design Guidelines - Changes to Buildings – Roofs:

2. Retain and preserve all architectural features that are character-defining elements of the roof, such as cupolas, chimneys, dormers, and turrets.
12. If new gutters and downspouts are necessary, install them so that no architectural features are damaged or lost.
13. Coat replacement gutters and downspouts with paint or a baked-enamel finish in a color appropriate to the color of the house, unless they are made of copper.

Janet Gapen read from the Design Guidelines, Changes to Buildings - Architectural Metals, guidelines 1 and 2, page 29 which reads as follows:

1. Retain and preserve original architectural metals, including cast iron, wrought iron, steel, pressed tin, copper, aluminum, and zinc, as well as their finishes and colors.
2. Retain and preserve architectural metal features that are character-defining elements of a historic building or site, including fences, gates, cornices, rails, roofs, gutters, downspouts and hardware.

Judy Kandl read from guideline 3: *consider substitute material only if the original material is not technically feasible.*

Michael Young informed the Commission that he could not vote to replace with anything other than copper.

Adjoining property owner, Debra Rookard was present to speak in support. She informed the Commission that she specializes in historic preservation, and has been an architectural designer for 30 years. She stated that she is pleased with Mr. DeGraaf's choice of bronze which is very close to the existing copper color.

Mr. DeGraaf presented pictures of 2 houses on S. Fulton St. that have a similar style to his with white aluminum gutters and downspouts.

Janet Gapen read information from a Preservation Brief pertaining to the use of substitute materials on building exteriors which included circumstances that warrant consideration of substitute materials. She noted; however, that it did not specifically mention copper or metal materials.

Ms. Gapen informed the Commission that if they do approve the change the owner should be required to store the removed materials somewhere on site.

The following motion was made by Ronald Fleming: “I move that the Commission find the following facts concerning Application #H-42-06: that Daniel J. DeGraaf, owner of 618 S. Fulton St., appeared before the Commission and sought a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing copper gutters and downspouts with bronze aluminum, same size, baked finish; that Debra Rookard appeared before the Commission to support this request, this request should be granted based on The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and Chapter 2 – Changes to Buildings – Roofs, pages 10 and 11, guidelines 2,12, and 13, and Architectural Metals, page 29, guidelines 1 and 2 of the Residential Historic District Design Guidelines; there were no mitigating factors; therefore, I further move that a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application #H-42-06 be granted to Daniel J. DeGraaf, owner of 618 S. Fulton St., to make the changes detailed in the application.”

Raemi Evans seconded the motion. Commission members Evans, Fleming, Lyles, and Whitman voted AYE; members Hurt, Kandl, and Young voted NO.

H-20-06 130 W. Innes St. – Rowan County, owner - Jim Sides, applicant

Request: Revision to previous approval for Certificate of Appropriateness #H-20-06 to change from cast metal letters to plastic letters for safety reasons

Jim Sides was sworn to give testimony for the request.

Mr. Sides began by reminding the Commission of the COA granted to Rowan County for the placement of letters on the front of the County Office Building located at 130 W. Innes St. There was a stipulation that the letters be placed on the building with no holes drilled into the building. Mr. Sides testified that they now have second thoughts about placing the proposed letters on the building because the letters are very heavy and there are safety concerns about the possibility of the letters falling off the building. He continued by testifying that due to those facts, they are now requesting approval for plastic lettering so that they won’t have to worry about safety concerns or damage to the building.

Mr. Sides referred Commission members to the slides as he pointed out how the existing metal letters (the same style as originally approved) have changed over the years. The plastic lettering, he said, starts out at the same coloring as the existing letters are presently and will remain the same color over the years.

He presented samples of the plastic letters.

Michael Young read the following Non-Residential Historic District Design Guidelines - Chapter 4 Site Features & District Setting – Signage & Awnings, p. 54-55:

2. Signs should be compatible with the architectural character of the building in size, scale, materials and style. If possible, base new sign designs on historic documentation such as old photographs.
3. Use traditional materials commonly found on turn-of-the century commercial buildings such as wood, metal, or stone or use modern materials that have the appearance of traditional.
4. Whether they are wall-mounted, freestanding, affixed to awnings, or placed on the sidewalk, signs should be placed in locations that do not obscure any historic architectural features of the building or obstruct any views or vistas of Salisbury's historic downtown.
5. Wall signs should be flush-mounted on flat surfaces and done in such a way that does not destroy or conceal architectural features or details.
6. Wall-mounted signs on friezes, lintels, spandrels, and fascias over storefront windows should be of an appropriate size and fit within these surfaces.

In response to a question from Michael Young, Mr. Sides said the lifespan of the plastic lettering is “basically forever.”

Michael Young stated that the existing signage has been on the building for over 100 years. He asked if the proposed plastic lettering would last that long, and Mr. Sides responded “Sure.”

In response to a question from Anne Lyles, Michael Holdaway explained the procedure for placing the letters on the building. He testified that there would be a pad put on the back with double-faced tape and silicone placed behind the letters. He further stated that there would be some discoloration to the stone of the building when the existing letters are removed.

Michael Young commented that he would have real problem with putting plastic on the building.

Janet Gapen referred the members again to the list of circumstances that warrant consideration for substitute materials – (1) the unavailability of historic materials (2) the unavailability of skilled craftsmen (3) inherent flaws in the original materials (4) code required changes; also, (1) the lighter weight (2) a reduced need of maintenance.

She also read the guidelines for matching appearance of historic materials which stated that the new material should match the details and craftsmanship of the original as well as the color, texture, and finish of the original material.

Mr. Sides explained that once the letters are placed on the building it will be completely flat and very secure. He again reiterated the fact that the plastic material matches the existing as in its present state.

Susan Hurt stated that she thinks taping plastic lettering on the County's Administration building is going in the wrong direction.

Judy Kandle asked about the current metal letters darkening and if the new letters would match if the old ones kept getting darker. Mr. Sides answered by saying that the existing letters would not change from what they are. He said, "They have aged and changed colors as much as they are going to."

Mr. Sides quoted the guidelines as saying that modern materials that have the appearance of traditional materials can be used in place of the existing material. Meaning if the plastic has the appearance of existing material, it can be used as a substitute. He said the plastic letters would be affixed in the same way as the approved letters.

There was no one present to speak in opposition to the request.

Motion

Susan Hurt made the motion as follows: "I move that the Commission find the following facts concerning application #H-20-06 – that Jim Sides, applicant for Rowan County, owner of 130 W. Innes St., appeared before the Commission and sought a Certificate of Appropriateness to revise the previously approved COA to change from cast metal letters to plastic letters (this is to be added to the façade of the Rowan County Administrative Building) the change being for safety reasons; that Michael Holdeway appeared before the Commission in support of the request, no one appeared to oppose the request; this request should not be granted based on The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and Chapter 4 – Site Features and District Setting- Signage & Awnings, pages 54-55, guidelines 2-6 of the Non-Residential Historic District Design Guidelines; therefore, I further move that a Certificate of Appropriateness for Application #H-20-06 be denied to Jim Sides, applicant for Rowan County, owner of 130 W. Innes St., to make the changes detailed in the application."

Wayne Whitman seconded the motion; all members present voted AYE.

Committee Reports

Minor works: There were no questions pertaining to the submitted minor works approval listing.

Other Business

Notes from Janet Gapen

Ann Waters, a resident of the North Main Street Historic District, has been appointed by the City Council to the vacant seat on the Commission. Ms. Waters will be sworn in at the December meeting.

The new version of the Commission's rules and procedures are now ready for use. The old copy can be discarded.

A copy of the resolution in support of enabling legislation to regulate demolition of structures within the Downtown Local Historic District was given to each member, which was adopted January 17, 2006 by the City Council.

A copy of the House Bill passed by the General Assembly for the City of Statesville allowing their City Council to issue or deny permits for demolition to their historic districts was given to the members present.

The city attorney and a preservation attorney have looked at Statesville's bill, and have seen reasons that it should be rewritten to meet the desires of the City of Salisbury. No dead-line has been given yet for the wording.

Lorene Coate's office has already been notified of this bill in addition to 2 or 3 others that will go before the Assembly this year from the city.

The City of New Bern will also seek the same legislature this year.

The next edition of the PRESERVATION LINK newsletter will be published in January. Anyone who has a specific topic that would be of interest to property owners in the historic districts should contact Janet Gapen.

Preservation Month will be observed in May 2007; preparations should begin not later than February.

The incentive grants for 2006-07 were awarded in October; 8 requests were received and all 8 were granted. They were: 128 E. Henderson St., 220 E. Bank St., 313 N. Ellis St., 500 W. Council St., 302 S. Fulton St., 213 W. Monroe St., 703 N. Main St.

Michael Young reminded Commission members of the HPC appeal (COA#H- to the Zoning Board of Adjustment; the meeting will be held Monday, November 13th.

Minutes

The September minutes were approved upon a motion from Susan Hurt, seconded by Michael Young; and all members voting AYE.

Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Michael Young, Chair

Judy Jordan, Secretary

